



2019-2020 PROGRAM YEAR

VIRGINIA AMERICORPS STATE PROGRAM DIRECTOR RESOURCE MANUAL



25 YEARS of
NATIONAL
SERVICE

VIRGINIA SERVICE COMMISSION

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INTRODUCTION

A Brief History of National Service

In 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) was established to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. It merged the work and staffs of two predecessor agencies, ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service. At its inception, CNCS was directed to manage three main programs: Senior Corps (Foster Grandparents, Senior Companions, and RSVP), AmeriCorps (State and National, NCCC, and VISTA), and Learn and Serve America (no longer funded as of 2011).



Today, CNCS engages individuals of all ages and backgrounds as AmeriCorps members. Members commit their time to address critical community needs in CNCS's six priority or focus areas.

The priority areas are:

- Disaster Services
- Economic Opportunity
- Education
- Environmental Stewardship
- Healthy Futures
- Veterans and Military Families

CNCS is an important part of our nation's commitment to building a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility. See a glimpse of how national service evolved: <https://www.nationalservice.gov/about/who-we-are/national-service-timeline>.

Virginia Service Commission (VSC)

The Virginia Service Commission (VSC) is part of the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) – Office on Volunteerism and Community Services (OVCS). VSC is operated by Commonwealth of Virginia staff and manages the implementation of AmeriCorps State programming, supports the Governor’s Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism, and collaborates with other national service programs operating in Virginia.

The mission of VSC is to maximize and strengthen national service programming in Virginia through training, engagement of local and state leadership, promotion of service and volunteerism within the state, and documentation of service impact across the Commonwealth.

** We will use the acronym VSC to refer to our agency throughout this manual.*



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Purpose of This Manual

The Program Resource Manual was developed for assisting Virginia's AmeriCorps Program Directors gain a general understanding of the key expectations of AmeriCorps program and grant management. Additionally, the Manual will address requirements for overseeing and managing service sites, Site Supervisors, and AmeriCorps members, as well as demonstrating program impact and success through compliance and achievement of performance measures.

Program Directors should become familiar with the information contained in this manual, but understand too, that this manual cannot contain every detail of AmeriCorps information. For that, the reader is strongly encouraged to become familiar with the wealth of information and resources available on the CNCS website www.nationalservice.gov.



The electronic version of this manual, which will be updated periodically and as necessary, is located on the Virginia Service Commission website at <http://virginiasservice.virginia.gov/ameri-corps-national-service/ameri-corps-program-resources/>.

*This manual does not supersede any of the requirements established by CNCS with respect to regulations, requirements, and terms and conditions for AmeriCorps grants. The information in this manual does not include all the legal requirements of the AmeriCorps grant; it is intended as a resource to support AmeriCorps*State programs with the development of compliant program and fiscal operations. Please review CNCS guidance for managing AmeriCorps grants online at <http://nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/managing-ameri-corps-grants>.*

AMERICORPS AND YOUR PROGRAM

Laws and Regulations

The following laws and regulations govern and guide the Virginia AmeriCorps State program:

- National and Community Service Act of 1990 (as amended (42 U.S.C. § 12501 et seq.)
- National Civilian Community Corps- AmeriCorps NCCC of 1992
- National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993
- [Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act of 2009](#)
- [Code of Federal Regulations - 45 CFR Parts 2520 – 2550 Corporation for National and Community Service Chapter XXV](#)
- [AmeriCorps Terms and Conditions](#)

For more information on laws: www.nationalservice.gov/about/legislation

For more information on Managing AmeriCorps State and National (rules, regulations, and terms and conditions): <https://www.nationalservice.gov/build-your-capacity/grants/manage-ameri-corps-state-and-national-grants>.

Understanding Your Grant Agreement

The grant agreement is a legally binding contract that establishes a program's relationship with the Virginia Service Commission. A new grant agreement is signed each year, after a program has been approved for new or continued CNCS funding. It is the most essential document for an AmeriCorps program. Program Directors and key staff persons should become familiar with the [full grant agreement](#). The deliverables listed in the grant agreement are not intended to be an exhaustive list of all Virginia Service Commission and CNCS requirements. As stated in the grant agreement, there are referenced laws, regulations, provisions, and documents that govern the program. There may be additional requirements set forth by the Virginia Service Commission or CNCS at any time during the program year. Program Directors are responsible for meeting all requirements.

Terms and Conditions

CNCS publishes both General and Specific Terms and Conditions for each program year. These Terms and Conditions are updated annually with changes from the prior version listed at the beginning of the document. These documents outline the program, financial, and administrative compliance requirements for recipients and subrecipients.

They include binding requirements on your award established by CNCS which, when not met, can result in corrective actions, including disallowances.

Key Areas to Review

General Terms and Conditions

- Financial Management Standards (III.B.)
 - See also 2 CFR Part 200
- Role of the Office of Inspector General (III.G.)
 - Independent audits
- Reporting of Fraud, Waste and Abuse (III.H.)
 - Complaints, investigations and Hotline information
- National Service Criminal History Check Requirements (III.F)
- Conflict of Interest (III.T.)
 - Written standards of conduct
- Identification of Funding (III.M)
 - Explanation of federal funding in documents describing your program

Specific Terms and Conditions (takes precedence over General Terms and Conditions if there is a conflict between the two)

- Member Recruitment, Selection, and Exit (IV.)
- Prohibited Activities (V.C.)
- Recordkeeping (IX.A.)
- Breaches of PII (XVII.)

The Terms and Conditions can be found here:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/resources/financial-management/terms-conditions-and-certifications-assurances-cnsc-grants>

Program Director Role

The Program Director has a very important role in the administration of an AmeriCorps grant. Program Directors are expected to spend the majority of their staff time on AmeriCorps program operations. Program Director's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- Overall administrative operations of the program
- Grant application review and management
- Member recruitment and onboarding
- Ensuring strong processes of communication with Site Supervisors and service site locations/partners
- Supervising and training Site Supervisors and other staff
- Ensuring members are involved in meaningful direct service activities and have a positive member experience
- Coordinating, facilitating, and training members and non-AmeriCorps volunteers.
- Offering an open-door process for handling issues and mediating if necessary

- Observing programmatic and fiscal responsibilities, including submitting monthly and quarterly reports
- Acknowledging members as part of the team and creating an inclusive environment or space to perform their activities/tasks
- Program evaluation and tracking of performance measurements
- Compiling progress report data
- Managing the program's social media presence
- Organizing days of service
- Performing member evaluations
- Facilitating life skills, career or service training for life beyond AmeriCorps

Program Changes

Any program changes that will alter the scope or objective of the program, impact your program's performance measures, involve a turnover or extended absence or time reduction in a management/supervisory staff position, change your program's slot composition or propose any other material changes to the original executed grant agreement require that the Program Director to submit a [Program Change Request Form](#) to their VSC Program Officer. Any program considering making changes that will impact their approved performance measures should consult with their VSC Program Officer well in advance. Programs should not consider any request granted until written notification is provided to them from their Program Officer.



MEMBER ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT

Recruitment

Program Directors should aim to recruit a diverse group of Americans to participate in a meaningful term of national service. All programs should be constantly improving their recruitment efforts in order to achieve a goal of 100% enrollment.

Examples of where and how to seek potential members are:

- My AmeriCorps Portal – All positions *must* be listed in the My AmeriCorps Portal.
- Post the position and position description on your organization's website.
- Enlist partners, members, and host sites to refer interested individuals.
- [Service Year Alliance](#) – list your positions with the national Service Year database.
- Attend college campus and local job fairs.
- Post open positions on social media outlets – Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.



My AmeriCorps Recruitment (eGrants)

Programs are required to use the My AmeriCorps Portal in the eGrants system. This will ensure that the information from the potential member is already in the eGrants system if selected to serve in the program. All members must respond to the program's invitation to serve and complete the enrollment form for submission/approval in My AmeriCorps to be officially enrolled and activated to begin service.

Position Descriptions

Program Directors must develop member positions that provide for meaningful service activities and performance criteria that are appropriate to the skill level of members. Position descriptions must accurately and completely describe the activities to be performed by each member.

Use the appropriate language in your position descriptions and avoid using confusing jargon. Terms such as “job,” “work,” or “other duties as assigned” will be not be acceptable in a member's position description. Program Directors should revisit position description content annually prior to the start of the program year.

Eligibility

AmeriCorps Programs must document the eligibility of all prospective members.

An eligible member is an individual who:

- Is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service UNLESS the member is out of school and enrolled in a full-time, year-round youth corps or full-time summer program, in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 25.
- Has a high school diploma or equivalency certificate (or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalency before using the education award) and who has not dropped out of an elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member; or who has been determined by an independent assessment to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent
- Is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States.

The following are acceptable forms of certifying status as a U.S. citizen or national:

- A birth certificate showing that the individual was born in one of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, American Samoa or the Northern Mariana islands
- A U.S. Passport
- A report of birth abroad of a U.S. citizen (FS-240) issued by the State Department
- A certificate of birth-foreign service (FS 545) issued by the State Department
- A certificate of report of birth (DS-1350) issued by the State Department
- A certificate of naturalization (Form N-550 or N-570) issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)
- A certificate of citizenship (Form N-560 or N-561) issued by the INS.

Note: An I-9 is *not* an acceptable form for certifying status of a US citizen or national.

The following are acceptable forms of certifying status as a lawful permanent resident alien of the United States:

- Permanent Resident Card, INS Form I-551
- Alien Registration Card, INS Form I-551
- Passport indicating that the INS has approved temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence
- A Departure Record (INS Form I-94) indicating that INS has approved it as temporary evidence of lawful admission for permanent residence

Secondary documentation – If primary documentation is not available, the program must obtain written permission from CNCS and VSC to approve other documentation as sufficient to demonstrate the individual's status as a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful permanent resident alien

Selection

Program Directors should select eligible service-minded individuals who are dedicated to the goals of AmeriCorps and their organization. Before selecting a member, be sure that they have a clear understanding of the commitment and expectations of a term AmeriCorps service.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act ([ADA](#)) (42 U.S.C. 12101, et seq.), programs must provide reasonable accommodations to the known mental or physical disabilities of members, and all selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodations. Program Directors will have the responsibility for making decisions regarding reasonable accommodation.

National Service Criminal History Checks (NSCHC)

The Virginia Service Commission requires the following criminal history checks for all covered positions. An individual in a covered position is a person who receives a living allowance, stipend, education award, and/or salary through a national service program, including all AmeriCorps members and grant-funded staff.

PLEASE NOTE: The Virginia Service Commission requires the use of CNCS-approved vendors Truescreen and Fieldprint. The state check is not required to meet CNCS requirements for Virginia if a grantee obtains an NSOPW check from Truescreen, obtains any required state checks that are available from Truescreen, and conducts a Fieldprint fingerprint-based FBI check.

Check	Recurring Access to Vulnerable Populations*	No or Episodic Access to Vulnerable Populations*	When?
Truecreen NSOPW	X	X	Completed BEFORE the start of service
Virginia State Criminal Repository Check	NO, so long as using Truescreen and Fieldprint	NO, so long as using Truescreen and Fieldprint	N/A, so long as using Truescreen and Fieldprint
State of Residence Check (if applicable)	If available through Truescreen	If available through Truescreen	Completed BEFORE the start of service if using Truescreen
Fieldprint Fingerprint-based FBI Check	X	X	Initiated by the start of service
Virginia Child Protective Services Check	X	X	Initiated by the start of service

* *Vulnerable populations* include children 17 years of age or younger, persons age 60 and older, and/or people with disabilities. *Recurring access* is defined as “the ability on more than one occasion to approach, observe, or communicate with an individual through physical proximity or other means, including but not limited to electronic or telephonic communication.” *Episodic Access* is access to a vulnerable population that is not a regular, scheduled, and anticipated component of an individual’s service activities.

* It is not necessary to redo the NSCHC for individuals who serve consecutive terms of service with the same program, so long as:

- (1) the break in service does not exceed 120 days and
- (2) the original check is compliant for the covered position in which the individual will be serving. You must retain documentation of the original check results.

Conducting NSCHC

- *Required Steps –*
 - Verify the identity of the applicant through government-issued photo identification
 - Obtain written consent from the applicant to conduct the checks – Truescreen and Fieldprint obtain and document consent from the applicant for criminal history checks
 - Document that the applicant understands that his or her selection is contingent on the results of the checks
 - A Truescreen NSOPW and any applicable State of Residence checks using Truescreen **MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE START OF SERVICE**
 - The Fieldprint FBI Check must be initiated by the start of service
 - Provide and document accompaniment while checks are pending when service involves vulnerable populations
 - *Adjudicate all checks*
 - Provide an opportunity for the applicant to challenge the results of the checks
 - Maintain the results of the checks in a confidential manner
 - Ensure that members are reimbursed if necessary
- *Truescreen NSOPW–* An NSOPW check must be completed and adjudicated through the Truescreen system **BEFORE** a member starts service. Any hours or expenses accrued before an NSOPW check was conducted will be disallowed.

To order an applicant’s check, you will provide the applicant’s email, anticipated start date, and whether the individual has access to vulnerable populations. After you have ordered the check, an email will be automatically sent to the applicant to create an account, complete identification forms, and sign disclosures. The applicant will be required to submit a digital signature

and upload a government-issued photo identification. Truescreen will run the checks and notify you when the check is complete.

You must review the applicant's uploaded ID and review and adjudicate the results in the Truescreen system.

<https://www.mytruescreen.com/signin/signin.jsp?r=N>

- *Virginia State Criminal Repository Check* – The CNCS-approved repository for Virginia Background Checks is Virginia State Police, Bureau of Administration & Support Service. Use Form SP-167 to order a criminal history records check.

https://www.vsp.virginia.gov/CJIS_Criminal_Record_Check.shtm

* The Virginia state check is not required to meet CNCS requirements for Virginia if a grantee obtains an NSOPW check from Truescreen, obtains any required state checks that are available from Truescreen, and conducts a fingerprint-based FBI check.

- *State of Residence Check* – A State of Residence Check should be ordered through Truescreen if it is available. Any check ordered using Truescreen must be completed and adjudicated before the start of service.

PLEASE NOTE: The state where an applicant resides is the state that the individual identifies as his/her place of residence at the moment of application. There is no measure of how long an individual has resided at the location that a program is required to validate to establish the correct state of residence.

<https://www.mytruescreen.com/signin/signin.jsp?r=N>

- *Fieldprint FBI Fingerprint-based Check* – You will need to provide your Fieldprint code to the applicant. The applicant will set up an account, complete information, sign agreements, and set up a Livescan fingerprint appointment. You will receive an email when the applicant's check is complete. You must log in to your portal to view and adjudicate the results of the check.

PLEASE NOTE: For Fieldprint, ***grant recipient adjudication must be made outside the Fieldprint system.*** This means that printing the Fieldprint adjudication results is not an adequate adjudication of the results. You must indicate who reviewed the results, when they reviewed the results, and their final determination of the applicant's fitness for service. An initial and date on the printout of the results would be an example of an adequate adjudication.

<https://www.fieldprintcnscs.com/>

- *VA CPS Check* - Results of the check are sent directly to the program headquarters or Human Resource Department. The Central Registry Unit in the Virginia Department of Social Services has waived the processing fee for AmeriCorps members. The Child Protective Services Form can be found here:
https://www.dss.virginia.gov/files/division/licensing/background_index_childre_ns_facilities/founded_cps_complaints/032-02-0151-12-eng.pdf
- Please note that the following individuals are ***ineligible*** to serve or work in a covered position:
 - Anyone who is listed, or required to be listed, on a sex offender registry
 - Anyone convicted of murder
 - Anyone who refuses to undergo the NSCHC
 - Anyone who makes a false statement in connection with a program's inquiry concerning the person's criminal history

Accompaniment - Accompaniment is required for individuals in covered positions with recurring access to vulnerable populations while checks are pending. A person is accompanied when he or she is in the physical presence of a person cleared for access to a vulnerable population. A program may elect to cease accompaniment of the individual when it has received results clearing the individual from either the state component or the FBI component.

Accompaniment must be documented on a member's timesheet. Documentation must include the date, time(s), and name of the accompanier.

* Effective January 1, 2020, programs must receive results from both components before electing to cease accompaniment.

Required Annual Training - Program Directors are required to complete the CNCS NSCHC E-course annually and send certifications of completion to VSC.

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/reqCHCtraining>

Enrollment

There are several steps to enrolling new members.

Prior to enrollment:

- Set up service locations in eGrants
- Submit Service Opportunity Listings in MyAmeriCorps
- Recruit members
- Members will apply via MyAmeriCorps or through an outside process

- Screen members for eligibility and criminal history
- Select member applicants and send invitations to applicants via MyAmeriCorps
- Once an applicant accepts the invitation via email, they will complete the member portion of the Enrollment Form in MyAmeriCorps
- The Social Security Administration will verify the applicant's social security number and citizenship
 - * If the SSN and citizenship are verified automatically, the Enrollment Form will update with "Verified" status
 - * If the SSN and citizenship are not automatically verified, the program will be notified and will need to request a secure link and submit the necessary documentation via the National Service Hotline. Once documentation is verified, the Enrollment Form will update with "Manually Verified" status.

Enrollment:

- Confirm that SSN/citizenship are "Verified" or "Manually Verified"
- Check NSCHC boxes certifying that the Truescreen NSOPW is complete and that the state (if applicable) and Fieldprint FBI check(s) are initiated.
 - * NSCHC boxes must be checked on or before a member's start date
 - * Please note that if you are using Truescreen as your vendor for any state checks, those checks need to be completed BEFORE the start of service
- Enter member placement information on the Enrollment Form including: Start Date, Program Year, Program Title, Service Location, Slot Type
- Click the "Enroll" button in eGrants to enroll the member. **ENROLLMENT MUST BE COMPLETE 8 CALENDAR DAYS FROM THE MEMBER'S START DATE.**

PLEASE NOTE: Members who have previously received the equivalent of 2 full time education awards, or who will exceed 2 full time awards with the new term, will receive an email and will need to acknowledge that they will receive a partial or no education award for the new term prior to enrollment.

Service Agreements

Member service agreement must include, at a minimum, the following:

- Member position description;
- The minimum number of service hours (as required by statute) and other requirements (as developed by the program) necessary to successfully complete the term of service and to be eligible for the education award;
- The amount of the education award being offered for successful completion of the terms of service in which the individual is enrolling;
- Standards of conduct, as developed by the recipient or subrecipient;
- The list of prohibited activities, including those specified in the regulations at 45 CFR § 2520.65;

- The text of 45 CFR §§ 2540.100(e)-(f), which relates to Nonduplication and Nondisplacement;
- The text of 45 CFR §§ 2520.40-.45, which relates to fundraising by members;
- Requirements under the Drug-Free Workplace Act (41 U.S.C. § 701 et seq.);
- Civil rights requirements, complaint procedures, and rights of beneficiaries;
- Suspension and termination rules;
- The specific circumstances under which a member may be released for cause;
- Grievance procedures; and
- Other requirements established by the subrecipient.

The Program Director must ensure that the service agreement is signed before the start of service so that members are fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.

MEMBER AND PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

On-Boarding and Orientation

Orientation should provide members with the necessary tools to have a successful service experience and build a strong team of AmeriCorps members. As a manager and mentor, orientation is an opportunity to express your expectations to members in a professional and fun way.

- A well-prepared and comprehensive orientation agenda will cover the following areas:
 - The history of AmeriCorps and the larger national service movement
 - Terms of Service – minimum number of hours to complete a term of service
 - Program and Site Orientation – your organization’s goals and vision, introduction to service sites, program’s code of conduct, etc.
 - An overview of the community or communities served
 - Member Rights and Responsibilities
 - Benefits – stipend, healthcare (for full time members), SNAP, education award, etc.
 - Timekeeping and Leave Policy – excused and unexcused absences, disciplinary measures, timesheets, etc.
 - [Prohibited Activities](#)
 - Suspension and Termination
 - Member Grievance Policy and Procedures – progressive disciplinary procedures
 - Performance Measures
 - Performance Evaluation – midterm (for full time members) and end-of-term evaluations (for all members)
 - Team Building
 - Diversity and Inclusion Training

Supervision and Support

Program Directors are expected to have strong member management systems to ensure members have a successful service experience. Program Directors must ensure that members have adequate supervision from a qualified supervisor. A qualified Site Supervisor will have a thorough knowledge of your program and its goals, as well as the requirements and expectations of AmeriCorps service, and be able to communicate those goals and expectations to members. Supervisors should have a clear idea of what a member’s day-to-day service activities are, as well as what activities are prohibited.

Additionally, Program Directors and Site Supervisors should develop strong networks and systems of communication with members.

Strong AmeriCorps member management, including direct supervision, helps programs achieve an overall goal of 100% member retention.

Files and Documentation

The organization and maintenance of member files is the most essential administrative function performed by a Program Director. The documents maintained in these files provide evidence that members were eligible for their positions at the time of enrollment and qualify to receive member benefits. It is imperative that these documents are kept in a safe and secure location, with access granted only to essential program staff persons. If a member submits a written request to view the contents of their file, they must be permitted to do so. Both the My AmeriCorps Portal (eGrants) and the member file must match. Updates made to one must also be made to the other.



At a minimum, a member's file should include:

- Application (if completed outside of eGrants)
- Employment Verification Form (I-9)
- W-4
- VA-4
- Copy of the government-issued document used to verify citizenship
- Healthcare Enrollment Form (if full time)
- Childcare Enrollment Form (if full time)
- Printed and adjudicated NSCHC results from Fieldprint
- Accompaniment documentation (if applicable)
- Member Service Agreement
- Performance Evaluations
- Behavioral warnings and action plans (if applicable)

Recordkeeping Requirements

Please note that federal statute requires that the subrecipient must retain all financial records, supporting documentation, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to their grant agreement for a period of three (3) years after the termination of all activities funded under this agreement.

Documentation related to a member, including eligibility documentation, should be kept in hard copy or electronically for seven (7) years from the members' final exit date. Please note that CNCS does not require programs to keep copies of timesheets. They can be exported from OnCorps on a quarterly, 6 month or annual basis using the Timesheet export function under Time Tracking if programs wish to keep these records. These records are kept in OnCorps for a period of three program years. No action is required by programs.

Financial, programmatic, and individual member-related records entered into OnCorps are automatically saved for three (3) program years at the Virginia Service Commission's expense. Programs do not need to pay individually for this service. This time frame is sufficient and no action is required by programs.

Timesheets/Tracking Member Hours

Program Directors, Site Supervisors, and other program staff have the responsibility for the overall management of member timesheets. Program Directors should create a plan for monitoring and oversight, as well as establish policies and procedures around the process.

Timesheet reviewers must be trained prior to the onboarding of members. Staff training and refreshers should occur throughout the year. Training on timesheet maintenance must be provided to all members during orientation, with refresher trainings as necessary. Virginia OnCorps training and tutorials are readily available under the resources on the website. When you are assigning partners and sites to these roles, remember to include the following information in the MOA/MOU agreements:

- Details of any tasks assigned, especially if the Site Supervisor is responsible for approving timesheets and tracking members
- Hierarchy or role level of the assignment
- Consequences if the agreement is not followed

Accurate and compliant timesheets should:

- Be up-to-date, correct, and fully approved by the Site Supervisor and Program Director. Timesheets must be approved by at least two supervisors.
- Have the member's original signature and date
 - If using an electronic signature on timesheets, please note that a secure, verifiable electronic signature system (a) identifies and authenticates a particular person as the source of the electronic signature; and (b) indicates such person's approval of the information contained in the electronic message. Once appropriate electronic signatures have been applied, no changes may be made unless there is a clear, auditable record of the revision.
- Have notation of time, date, and hours

- Have notation of the activity (direct service hours, training hours, fundraising hours). For normal day-to-day DIRECT service that is clearly defined, members do NOT need a description.
- Have notation of appropriate breaks
- Document accompaniment for members who have not yet received clearance on their NSCHC
- Have guidelines for submitting timesheets noted on the sheet
- Not show service on non-service days
- Not show telework or teleservice. Telework or teleservice is not allowed except under very specific circumstances, such as for online trainings or webinars that supervisors can confirm were completed with a certificate of completion. Members should focus on direct service activities.

Additionally, you must ensure that:

- Members have a secure internet connection to submit timesheets
- Member service activities listed are in line with approved program objectives and are not prohibited activities
- Members are on target to attain their intended number of service hours and are no more than 10% ahead or behind
- Educational training activities are listed accurately and do not exceed an aggregate of 20% for the Corps
- Program staff consistently audit and track member timesheet activities for accuracy and appropriateness of activities
- Fundraising activities are tracked to ensure members spend no more than 10% of their time on those activities
- Site Supervisors review and approve timesheets within two weeks of submission

Performance Evaluations

Program Directors and Site Supervisors are expected to conduct thoughtful and thorough performance evaluations for members. Specific and relevant feedback helps members complete their service year successfully and to grow professionally and personally.

Midterm evaluations are required for full time members and end-of-term evaluations are required for all members.

At a minimum, end-of-term evaluations must address the following:

- Whether the member has completed the required number of hours as outlined in their member service agreement
- Whether the member has satisfactorily completed their assignment, tasks or projects
- Whether the member has met other performance criteria that were clearly communicated at the beginning of the term of service

- Whether the member has completed the required number of hours as outlined in their member service agreement;

The end-of-term evaluation must be signed and dated by the member and their supervisor.

Benefits

- Living Allowance (Stipend)
A living allowance is not a wage and programs may not pay living allowances on an hourly basis. Programs must distribute the living allowance at regular intervals and increments, and may increase living allowance payments only based on increased living expenses such as food, housing, or transportation. Living allowance payments are distributed to the participant during the participant's term of service and must cease when the participant concludes the term of service. Programs may not provide a lump sum payment to a participant who completes the originally agreed-upon term of service in a shorter period of time. Please see 45 CFR §§ 2522.240 and 2522.250 for more information regarding the distribution of member living allowances.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
SNAP assistance is available to AmeriCorps members. The AmeriCorps living allowance is not considered income for purposes of determining eligibility for [SNAP](#). However, if the member has other income/benefits or criminal history, there is the possibility of being denied these benefits.

For further assistance or questions please contact Celestine Jackson, VDSS Benefit Programs, at celestine.jackson1@dss.virginia.gov

- Unemployment Benefits
AmeriCorps members are not entitled to unemployment benefits. CNCS has interpreted federal legislation to mean that there is no employer-employee relationship between members and programs.
- Virginia Worker's Compensation
In Virginia, AmeriCorps members are not considered employees; however, special legislation was passed in 2004 to provide Worker's Compensation for AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps members are deemed employees of the Commonwealth of Virginia for purposes of the Workers' Compensation Act. The Act states that AmeriCorps members shall be eligible for medical costs from covered injuries but shall not be eligible for weekly compensation. Specific reference is cited in *Code of Virginia* Title 65.2.
- Segal Education Award
The Eli Segal Education Award is a post-service benefit awarded to members upon successful completion of service. It is high on the list of priorities to cover and

discuss during orientation. For more information about eligibility, limitations on terms or the value of the award, education award payments, award transfers, taxes, schools and loan holders:

<https://www.nationalservice.gov/programs/amicorps/segal-amicorps-education-award>

**A member cannot serve more than four terms and cannot receive more than the equivalent of two full time education awards. A member serving in a full time term of service is required to complete the service within 12 months.*

Service Activities

Direct Service Activities

Direct service activities are member activities that are consistent with your approved AmeriCorps grant application. AmeriCorps members must directly address local community needs within the six focus areas of education, disaster services, healthy futures, veterans and military families, economic opportunity, and environmental stewardship. Members must provide service to directly impact communities and the benefits must be demonstrated by measureable outputs and outcomes.

Education and Training Activities

- Programs must monitor member education and training throughout their service year.
- No more than 20 percent of the aggregate of all AmeriCorps member service hours in your program, as reflected in the member enrollments in the National Service Trust, may be spent in education and training activities.
- Direct service activities do not count towards the 20 percent cap on education and training activities.

Fundraising Activities

An AmeriCorps member may spend no more than ten percent of his or her originally agreed-upon term of service performing fundraising activities. AmeriCorps members may raise resources directly in support of your program's service activities. AmeriCorps members may not raise funds for living allowances or your organization's general operating expenses.

- Examples of fundraising activities AmeriCorps members may perform include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - 1) Seeking donations of books from companies and individuals for a program in which volunteers teach children to read.
 - 2) Writing a grant proposal to a foundation to secure resources to support the training of volunteers.
 - 3) Securing supplies and equipment from the community to enable volunteers to help build houses for low-income individuals.

- 4) Securing financial resources from the community to assist in launching or expanding a program that provides social services to the members of the community and is delivered, in whole or in part, through the members of a community-based organization.
- 5) Seeking donations from alumni of the program for specific service projects being performed by current members.

Leave and Suspension

All programs should plan accordingly and leave room for occasions where members need to be absent from service. Program Directors should establish a clear system for members to make requests for leave and explain those procedures to members at orientation. Members should not record zero hours during any pay period. Unless the member is suspended, the member must still receive their normal living allowance while on leave.

Suspension is any extended period during which the member is not serving, accumulating service hours or receiving AmeriCorps benefits. Suspension can be used as both a disciplinary action against a member who has violated the terms of their member agreement and/or a means to address extenuating circumstances in the life of member who has otherwise performed satisfactorily. Under personal and compelling circumstances (as determined by the Program Director and/or site supervisor), a member may be suspended for up to 2 years from the date of suspension. Program Directors must submit [Program Change Request Form](#) and retain all documentation in the member's file.

Release from Participation and Exit

Program staff may release members from participating with the program before the member finishes their service term either for cause or for compelling personal circumstances.

If a member is released for cause, he/she did not successfully completing their service term for reasons other than compelling personal circumstances. A member leaving for cause can still be given a "satisfactory" for service on his exit form if he/she performed well during their term prior to exiting for cause.

A program that determines a member's circumstance as compelling can release a member for compelling circumstances based on review of supporting documentation and approval by VSC. CNCS allows programs the right to determine compelling circumstances for members as long as it meets the criteria in AmeriCorps 45 CFR § 2522.230(a). The program must keep records and supporting documentation related to the determination in the member's file. Non-compliance of any of these instances may result in disallowed costs and any other remedies for non-compliance.

PLEASE NOTE: A member who is released for a compelling personal circumstance and has completed:

- 30% of their service hours is eligible for a pro-rated education award. This slot cannot be refilled.
- Between 15 and 30% of their service hours may be eligible for a pro-rated education award. If the member elects to take the partial education award, this slot cannot be refilled. If the member does not take the education award, the slot can be refilled and the new member is eligible for a full award.
- Less 15% of their service hours is not eligible for a pro-rated education award. This slot can be refilled.

Program Directors have 30 days from a member's last day of service to exit the member in eGrants. After being exited, members must complete the Member Exits Forms and Member Exit Survey in MyAmeriCorps.

Program Slot Management

Programs that require changes to the current slot composition of AmeriCorps members in their program must submit a [Program Change Request Form](#). Only written requests using this form are acceptable. VSC and the program must consider impact on program quality and member experience. Programs must also be mindful of requesting a lesser term for full-time members, especially if they are receiving healthcare insurance or childcare assistance. The program must consider all of these factors prior to requesting changes.

- Programs may not request a transfer of currently enrolled members to a lesser-term status simply to provide a pro-rated education award if the member would otherwise be released for cause.
- Programs may not request to convert a slot to a lesser-term slot at the end of a member's term of service to award a pro-rated education award when the member has not completed the hours required by their original term.
- Programs that request changing a less than full-time member to a greater slot type is discouraged by CNCS. Changing a less than FT term to a full-time slot is not encouraged simply because it is very difficult to manage, unless done very early in the member's term of service. The Commission may approve such changes only in extenuating circumstances; and if the program's current budget can accommodate such changes. Keep in mind other costs that are associated with full-time members, such as healthcare costs and the education award amount the member would receive. These changes could alter the funds already awarded to your program.

Changes in Member Terms of Service or Program Slots

A. Changes that Require CNCS Approval.

Circumstances may arise within a program that necessitate changing the type of unfilled AmeriCorps member positions awarded to a recipient or subrecipient, or changing the term of service of a currently enrolled member. Note that once a member is exited with a partial education award, the remaining portion of that education award is not available for use. The following changes require written approval from CNCS's Office of Grants Management as well as written approval and concurrence from VSC:

1. A change in the number of member service year (MSY) positions in the award; and/or
2. A change in the funding level of the award.

B. Changing Slot Types (unfilled positions).

Recipients or subrecipients may change the type of slots awarded to their program if:

1. The change does not increase the total MSYs authorized in the Notice of Grant Award (e.g. one half-time position cannot be changed to one full-time position); and
2. The change does not increase the value of the education award; and,
3. If the award is a Full-cost Fixed Amount or Professional Corps Fixed Amount award, the slot will be filled by a member serving in a full-time capacity.

All changes to slot type are subject to availability of funds in the Trust, must be Trust-neutral, and must comply with all assumptions on which Trust prudence and continued solvency are predicted. Recipients are able to make changes directly in the My AmeriCorps Portal. VSC requires that programs must complete the [Program Change Request Form](#) prior to making changes to member slots.

C. Changing a Term of Service (currently enrolled positions).

Changes in terms of service may not result in an increased number of MSYs for the program.

1. Full-time. VSC may authorize or approve occasional changes of currently enrolled full-time members to less than full-time members. Impact on program quality should be factored into approval of such requests.

CNCS will not cover healthcare or childcare costs for less than full-time members. It is not allowable to transfer currently enrolled full-time members to a less than full-time status simply to provide a less than full-

time education award.

2. Less than Full-time. CNCS discourages changing less than full-time members to full-time because it is very difficult to manage, unless done very early in the member's term of service. VSC may authorize or approve such changes so long as their current budget can accommodate such changes. Programs must keep in mind that a member's minimum 1700 hours must be completed within 12 months of the member's original start date.
- D. Refilling Slots.
- Programs that have fully enrolled their awarded member slots are allowed to replace any member who terminates service before completing 30 percent of his/her term provided that the member who is terminated is not eligible for and does not receive a pro-rated education award. Programs may not refill the same slot more than once.

As a fail-safe mechanism to ensure that resources are available in the National Service Trust to finance all earned education awards, CNCS will suspend refilling if either: total AmeriCorps enrollment reaches 97 percent of awarded slots; or the number of refills reaches five percent of awarded slots.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to set forth the expectations for fulfilling AmeriCorps fiscal management responsibilities and requirements in order to ensure compliance with federal and state regulations, including OMB Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards found at <https://www.ecfr.gov>. This section will also outline VSC processes for awarding funds, funds disbursement, expenditure reporting, and monitoring of subgrantee budgets and required share, or match.



Grant Awards

AmeriCorps grants management must comply with federal and state statutes, regulations and applicable terms and conditions which are set forth in the Request for Applications (RFA) document. Funds are issued by VDSS through a Subaward Agreement which is a legally binding contract that binds the subgrantee to the CNCS Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), AmeriCorps regulations, the approved grant application and budget, AmeriCorps terms and conditions and any additional grant provisions. Awards are not binding until a subaward agreement is fully executed between VDSS and the subgrantee.

Performance Period

As outlined in the applicable Request for Applications (RFA), funds are awarded for a one-year performance period with specified renewal options for continuation based on subgrantee performance and contingent upon the availability of CNCS funding. Use of federal funds is authorized only during the performance period cited in the subaward agreement. No costs incurred outside of the performance period are reimbursable.

The program year performance period is determined by the date entered on the Application for Federal Assistance (SF 424) completed as part of the subgrantee's application to VDSS. The start date may not occur prior to the grant award to VDSS from the Corporation for National and Community Service. In addition, the start date may not commence before the end date of the prior program year, in the case of

continuation awards, or prior to full execution of the subaward agreement by both parties. AmeriCorps members may serve only during the approved performance period.

Pre-award Costs

If a program must operate and incur reimbursable costs such as recruitment costs, prior to the date cited in the Subaward Agreement, the AmeriCorps Program Director must contact the VSC prior to program year start-up to seek and receive written approval through a pre-award cost agreement from VSC. This agreement is contingent upon approval by CNCS. AmeriCorps members may not begin serving, nor be enrolled in the eGrants Portal, until the effective date of the Subaward Agreement.

Pre-award Risk Assessment

In performing due diligence during the RFA process, VSC staff will evaluate the risks to the program posed by each applicant, including an assessment of the applicant organization's board governance structure and its capacity to meet financial management standards outlined in the AmeriCorps State General Terms and Conditions. If VSC determines that an award will be made to an applicant with assessed risks, special conditions that correspond to the degree of assessed risk may be applied to the subgrantee's award. These conditions will be outlined in the VDSS Subaward Agreement.

Award Documentation

The award package with the subgrantee consists of the following documents:

1. Intent to Award Letter
2. Executed Subaward Agreement incorporating the grant provisions of the applicable RFA and any additional conditions
3. The subgrantee's application, including the Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424), budget and budget narrative and all required attachments, including but not limited to:
 - FFATA
 - Certification of Availability of Matching Funds
 - Certification of Approval of Use of Federal Funds
 - Certification of Organization Authorization

Financial Management Requirements

Pursuant to 2 CFR Part 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, also known as the Uniform Guidance, all subgrantees must maintain financial management systems that include standard accounting practices, sufficient internal controls, a clear audit trail, and written cost allocation procedures.

The following are indicators of a strong financial management system:

1. Maintain an accurate general ledger supported by source documentation and which clearly establishes expenditures allocable and non-allocable to the grant;
2. Document payroll through actual time and attendance records;
3. Proper segregation of duties;
4. Insure, maintain, and keep track of program property, if applicable;
5. Document and track in-kind and cash match required by the grant award;
6. Maintain a system that tracks costs based on the appropriate program year;
7. Maintain a system that tracks actual costs versus those budgeted; and
8. Maintain a system that differentiates between direct and indirect costs and administrative costs.

Allowable Costs

A cost is considered allowable under the grant if it is:

1. Reasonable and necessary for the performance of the grant award;
2. Budgeted under the grant;
3. Complies with generally accepted accounting principles;
4. Complies with 2 CFR Part §230 Cost principles;
5. Not charged against any other grant or used to match other grant funds;
6. Treated consistently with other costs incurred by the organization;
7. Documented adequately;
8. Conforms to the limitations and exclusions in the award as to types or amounts of cost items;
9. Consistent with policies and procedures of the subgrantee organization; and
10. Accorded consistent treatment that apply uniformly to both the federal grant-funded activities and to all other activities of the applicant.

Allocable Costs

An allowable cost is allocable to the grant as either a program or administrative cost if it is:

1. Incurred specifically for the program approved in the grant application;
2. Benefits the program; or
3. Is necessary to the overall administration of the program.

Financial Policies and Procedures

Written financial policies and procedures are vitally important to a program's financial management system and its accountability for federal funds since they govern an organization's system of internal controls. Written policies and procedures are integral to an organization's continuity of operations and an important tool when orienting new staff.

Documented policies and procedures should include the following:

1. An accounting system that segregates costs, including match
2. Identification and description of the principal accounting records (i.e. general ledgers, budgets, financial reports, etc.)
3. Assignment of staff responsibilities, delegation of authority, and decision-making
4. Explanations of documentation and approval requirements for expenditures
5. Internal controls over funds management (i.e. check signer limits, requisition and check request approvals, inventory, disposal of assets, travel, etc.)
6. Instructions for program's completion of monthly reports, bank reconciliations, and monitoring budgets and match requirements
7. Preparation and review of financial reports
8. Personnel information (i.e. sick leave, overtime, vacation, holidays, acceptable standards of conduct, probation, performance reviews, etc.)
9. Procurement and purchasing;
10. Internal controls to protect the organization against fraud, waste, and abuse and to ensure accuracy and reliability in accounting and operating information, including an adequate segregation of duties; and

Audit Requirements

An audit is a risk management tool that can identify fiscal weaknesses which could put CNCS funds at risk. The subgrantee must comply with the audit and reporting requirements defined by the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in Subpart F – Audit Requirements, as applicable. A subgrantee who expends \$750,000 or more in combined federal funding during the subgrantee's fiscal year is required to have an independent audit performed annually in accordance with the provisions of Subpart F. The single audit report(s) package must be submitted on-line to the Federal Audit Clearinghouse (FAC) within the earlier of thirty calendar days after receipt of the auditor's report(s) by the subrecipient, or nine months after the end of the audit period. For specific questions and information concerning the submission process: Visit the Federal Audit Clearing House at [https://harvester.census.gov/facides/\(S\(ilywi5ipbj3rjov5zv1fnos\)\)/account/login.aspx](https://harvester.census.gov/facides/(S(ilywi5ipbj3rjov5zv1fnos))/account/login.aspx) or call FAC at the toll-free number: (800) 253-0696

The audit must be conducted by an independent auditor who will determine:

- if the organization's financial statements present the organization's and the program's financial position fairly;
- if the organization has the internal control structure to ensure that the program is managing the award in accordance with the applicable federal laws and regulations; and
- if the program has complied with applicable laws and regulations that may have a direct and material effect on the program's financial statements.

The following steps are taken by VSC in reviewing a program's audit report:

- The opinion of audit firm is read to determine whether it has a qualified or unqualified opinion.
- The summary of findings is reviewed in detail to ensure there are no programmatic findings, especially those that would reflect unfavorably on awarding the subgrantee AmeriCorps funding.

A subgrantee that does not expend a minimum of \$750,000 in federal awards is exempt from the federal single audit requirement. *As pass-through entity, the VDSS strongly encourages subgrantees not meeting the single audit threshold to obtain, at a minimum, an annual review of financial statements in conformance with Statements on Standards for Accounting and Review Services (SSARS) performed by an independent auditor.*

Disbursement of Funds and Expenditure Reporting

Grant-related activities are tracked in multiple record-keeping and reporting portals, including OnCorps and eGrants.

OnCorps and Periodic Expense Reports (PERs)

AmeriCorps State formula and competitive subawards are operated on a cost reimbursement basis. Periodic Expense Reports submitted in OnCorps allow program and fiscal staff to track cumulative expenditures against approved budget categories and line items. Upon request by VSC, a subgrantee will be required to provide supporting (source) documentation for costs claimed on any given PER or Aggregate Financial Report.

VSC requires that subgrantees request reimbursement monthly by generating and submitting Periodic Expense Reports (PERs) in the OnCorps reporting portal. Programs must enter monthly expenditures in OnCorps on or before the 10th of every month for the previous month's expenditures for approval by the fiscal officer. In extreme cases, an extension may be requested.

Subgrantees should allow at least five business days for PERs to be reviewed and approved by the fiscal officer. Upon the fiscal officer's verification of a program's expenditures and match, the PER is forwarded to the VDSS Finance division for review and approval, and then to the Virginia Department of Accounts for payment. Because the Commonwealth's payment processing procedures consist of several steps, programs should submit reimbursements through the PER in a timely fashion. Processing for payments may be slower at the end of the fiscal year (June 30th), during the General Assembly session (January – April), and during the winter holidays (Thanksgiving – New Year's Day).

OnCorps and Aggregate Financial Reports (AFRs)

In addition to the PER, an Aggregate Financial Report (AFR) for the most recent quarter must be submitted through OnCorps which enables VSC and VDSS Finance staff to complete and submit its mandated quarterly Federal Financial Report (FFR) to CNCS. The AFR tool is designed to aid subgrantee program and fiscal staff in creating a consolidated cash and expenditure report for compliance with federal regulations.

At the end of the quarter when the AFR is submitted, the fiscal officer will compare the total amount of funds reimbursed to the total number of reported expenditures and work with the AmeriCorps program staff to make any necessary adjustments to the next monthly reimbursement. The applicable PERs must be approved in OnCorps for the current information to be reflected in the correct AFR quarter. Please note that it is required that an approved budget and at least one approved PER exist in OnCorps before creating an AFR.

Submission Timeline

AFRs will be due in OnCorps on the following dates:

Program Quarters	Due Dates
1 st 9/1 – 9/30	October 10 th
2 nd 10/1 – 12/31	January 10 th
3 rd 1/1 – 3/31	April 10 th
4 th 4/1 – 6/30	July 10 th
5 th 7/1 – 8/31	September 10 th

If the 10th falls on a weekend or state holiday, AFRs are due the next business day.

Policy on Submission of Late PERs & AFRs

Only AmeriCorps programs with extenuating circumstances will be granted an extension for PER and/or AFR submission. AmeriCorps Programs requesting an extension must email the request for extension to the fiscal officer at least two days prior to the due date. Requests will be approved or denied via OnCorps only; no verbal extension requests will be honored.

Policy on Inaccurate Questioned Financial Submissions

VSC reviews each financial report submission for the following: proper signatory approvals and dates approved; consistent and adequate CNCS share and subgrantee share expenditure levels, administrative costs and reports of program income. If a program receives notification of corrections needed, the applicable PER or AFR will be rejected in OnCorps with comments noted in the Comments section of the report. The subgrantee is responsible for submitting a revised report to the VSC as instructed. No PERs and AFRs will be processed until all necessary corrections are submitted in OnCorps. *See also Budget Monitoring.*

Unexpended Funds Reports

VSC will conduct a review of, and projection for, the utilization of federal funds. Subgrantees are required to submit an unexpended funds report as requested. If subgrantees are not projected to spend 100% of federal funds awarded, AmeriCorps program staff must provide a detailed explanation with the unexpended funds report.

Budget Monitoring & Requests for Budget Modification

The subgrantee's application, submitted and approved in eGrants, contains the program budget which is subsequently uploaded into OnCorps at the beginning of the performance period. Though VSC is not *required* to seek, on behalf of a subgrantee, prior CNCS approval to move funds from a line item to another line item unless the cumulative amount is over 10% of the total budget, VDSS as pass-through entity, requests the following of subgrantees throughout the performance period:

- Only limited budget monitoring can occur through submission of PERs in OnCorps. Program directors should work closely with their organization's fiscal counterparts to monitor the budget, including a periodic joint review of budget to actual reports.
- Program directors in collaboration with their fiscal counterparts should discuss current and forecasted program conditions (slot conversions, retention, etc.) and other mitigating factors that may impact the ability to fully expend their CNCS awards and/or provide the required match levels. A strategy to address line item shortfalls or excess funds should be discussed with the VSC program officer and fiscal officer to determine if the subgrantee should proceed with a program change request and an accompanying budget modification.
- Shifts in subgrantee cash and in-kind contributions from approved categories to categories where no subgrantee share was previously approved should be addressed in the comments section of the PER.

Minor spending deviations may occur at the program level if the expenditures are allowable and fully documented. If, however, the periodic expense report reveals funding categories where funds expended have exceeded funds budgeted, which

become highlighted in yellow on the report, expenditures levels should be closely monitored.

A budget modification must be requested under the following circumstances:

- Purchase of equipment is proposed;
- Significant changes in scope or the objectives of the program are initiated; typically occurring with program change requests to the VSC program officer;
- Expenditures are to be incurred in line items which have no funds budgeted, for example when funds have been spent on half-time member living allowances, yet \$0 funds are budgeted in OnCorps. Without a pending modification, the PER may be rejected with comments by the fiscal officer causing unnecessary delays for subgrantee reimbursement;.
- Funding categories are highlighted in red in the PER indicating significant spending deviations; and
- Change in the subgrantee's federally-approved Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)- if indirect costs were previously approved in the budget.

Budget modifications may be submitted for consideration in OnCorps. Subgrantees are encouraged to discuss an impending modification request with the fiscal officer prior to submission to ensure that the modification is necessary and, if so, sufficient detail is provided in the Comments section of the PER to facilitate a prompt review.

Match or Subgrantee Share

The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) requires programs to match the amount of federal funds spent. Subgrantees in their first three years of programming contribute an overall match of 24%. Subgrantees must meet an overall increasing match requirement, up to 50% by year 10 per the following table:

AmeriCorps Funding Year	1, 2, 3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10+
Subgrantee Share Requirements	24%	26%	30%	34 %	38%	42%	46 %	50%

Subgrantees are responsible for meeting their approved level of match at the end of the program year and must provide documentation and account for the match as agreed upon in the approved application and budget. Programs may use cash and/or in-kind contributions to meet the overall subgrantee share level. Funds that are used as match are subject to the same requirements as directly awarded federal funding:

1. Must be allowable and necessary for accomplishing program objectives, and
2. Must meet requirements under 2 CFR Part 200.306 of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for

Federal Awards, including that match funds must be verifiable in the subgrantee's accounting records.

Proper accounting for all types of match includes:

- Maintaining adequate documentation to support the amounts claimed as match; maintaining the same type of documentation that you would to support expenditures claimed as CNCS share;
- Ensuring the documentation of the expense is similar to other program expenditures and consistent with organizational policies and procedures; proper documentation includes descriptions of donated items/services, agendas, and/or reports.
- Recording the donation and value of the item in detail; and
- Entering the amounts used as match into the general ledger as income and as an expenditure.

Subgrantees must report all federal and/or non-federal funds and in-kind contributions attributed to the subgrantee Share on the monthly Periodic Expense Report and the quarterly Aggregate Financial Report. For federal funds used as match, subgrantees must provide: the name of the other federal agency, the other federal agency grant or contract number, the CFDA number (or N/A if a contract), and the cumulative amount expended as match. In addition, subgrantees must maintain documentation on file demonstrating that the other federal agency approved the use of its funds for the AmeriCorps match. Please contact the fiscal officer if you are uncertain if a contribution meets match requirements or to determine the method of valuation of in-kind contributions.

Program Income

Program income must be tracked on an on-going basis and documented monthly on the Periodic Expense Report in OnCorps. Program income is revenue earned as a direct result of activities funded under the grant. Revenue received from other sources to support the program that does not result from grant activities is not considered program income. Program income must be used for purposes of the grant within the performance period. Program income may be used to cover the non-federal share of grant costs, or subgrantee share, and should be reported in the designated fields on the Aggregate Financial Report so that these funds can be reported by VSC in its Federal Financial Report to CNCS.

Administrative Costs/Indirect Costs

Based on qualifying factors, in their applications, subgrantees had the option of using a federally approved indirect cost rate, a 10% de minimis rate of modified total direct costs, or they could claim certain costs directly as outlined in 2 CFR § 200.413 Direct

costs. Subgrantees who hold a federal negotiated indirect cost rate must use that rate in lieu of the AmeriCorps 5/10% allocation of administrative costs. Under section 121(d) of the NCSA and CNCS's regulations at 45 CFR 2521.95 and 2540.110, no more than five percent of award funds may be used to recover indirect costs on AmeriCorps grants.

1. Definition of administrative costs: general expenses related to the overall administration of an organization; expenses do not pertain to a program or project cost.
2. For organizations with an approved indirect cost rate, administrative costs refer to those costs included in the organization's indirect cost rate.
3. For organizations that do not have an established indirect cost rate, examples of administrative costs are: accounting; financial; auditing; contracting or general legal services; general liability insurance; portions of salaries and benefits of Program Directors and other administrative staff time not attributable to time spent in support of a specific project.
4. Examples of non-allowable administrative costs: direct charges for AmeriCorps members (living allowance, insurance, etc.); staff who train, place, or supervise members or directly benefit programs; program evaluation or facility costs that support programs.

Commission Fee

The Virginia Service Commission will retain a Commission fee equal to 1% of CNCS funds expended during the program year. Commission fees are invoiced to subrecipients at the end of the program year.

AmeriCorps Member Expenses

1. Living Allowances: Subgrantees must provide a living allowance to members according to the following:
 - a. *Full-time Members*: All full-time members must receive a living allowance between the annual minimum and maximum amounts set forth by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS). For 2019, the range grantees must provide the minimum living allowance of \$13,992 and the maximum cost of \$27,984 per full-time member.
 - b. *Part-time Members*: Subgrantees are not required to pay part-time members living allowances. If a subgrantee chooses to pay a living allowance to part-time members, the amount should be prorated to the full-time allowance and cannot exceed the maximum for that slot type.

Table: Minimum and Maximum Living Allowances

Service Term	Minimum # of Hours	Minimum Living Allowance	Maximum Living Allowance
Full-time	1,700	\$13,992	\$27,984
Three Quarter Time	1,200	n/a	\$19,753
Half-time	900	n/a	\$14,815
Reduced Half-time	675	n/a	\$11,111
Quarter-time	450	n/a	\$7,408
Minimum-time	300	n/a	\$4,938

- c. *Living Allowance Distribution (2019 AmeriCorps Terms & Conditions)*: Living allowances are not wages; they are funds designed to help members meet the necessary living expenses incurred while participating in the AmeriCorps program. Subgrantees may not pay living allowances on an hourly basis, nor should payments fluctuate based on the number of hours a member serves in a given period. Subgrantees must pay the living allowance in increments (i.e. weekly or bi-weekly). Subgrantees may use their organization's established payroll system to process living allowance payments.

2. Taxes

- a. **Income Taxes**: Subgrantees are required to withhold federal and state personal income taxes from member living allowances. Each member is required to complete a W-4 form at the beginning of the member term of service and be provided with a W-2 form in accordance with federal law.
- b. **FICA (Social Security and Medicare taxes)**: Subgrantees are required to pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance. Subgrantees must withhold the required FICA tax rate of 7.65% from a member's living allowance.

3. Insurance

- a. **Health Care Coverage**: Subgrantees must provide health care coverage to all full-time members who are not otherwise covered by a health care policy at the time of enrollment into the AmeriCorps program, or to those members who lose coverage during their term of service because of participating in the program, or through no deliberate act of their own. Grantees must provide a health care policy that meets the minimum benefits at a reasonable cost set forth in the AmeriCorps State Terms & Conditions.
- 1) **CNCS Policy**: CNCS will not cover health care costs for family members, nor part-time members. However, part-time members who are serving in a full-time capacity for a sustained period may be eligible for health care benefits paid in part by CNCS funds; written approval must be obtained by the VSC prior to enrolling the member in the health care system.

- 2) Obtaining Health Care Coverage: Subgrantees may obtain health care insurance for members through any provider, if the policy meets the minimum benefits and is not excessive in cost. Subgrantees that choose their own policies must submit a copy of the policy along with a summary of benefits and costs to VSC at the beginning of the program year.
- b. Liability Insurance: Subgrantees must have adequate general liability coverage for the organization, employees, and members, including coverage of members engaged in on- and off-site project activities.
 - c. Unemployment Insurance: Subgrantees cannot charge the cost of unemployment insurance taxes for members to the grant because no employer-employee relationship exists. Members perform service and are not considered employees.
 - d. Worker's Compensation: Worker's Compensation coverage is required for all AmeriCorps Members regardless of slot type. Coverage is administered by the Commonwealth of Virginia through VDSS and is invoiced to subrecipients at the end of the program year.
- #### 4. Member Gear
- a. AmeriCorps Service Gear: Subgrantees are required to purchase AmeriCorps attire for each member for the purpose of identifying the member with national service, specifically the AmeriCorps program.
 - b. Program Service Gear: Subgrantees can purchase local program uniforms for members; however, the AmeriCorps name and logo must be used on all gear. CNCS funds may be used to purchase such items if it includes the AmeriCorps logo. All other service gear must be purchased with non-CNCS funds.
- #### 5. Child Care: Subgrantees are required to ensure that child care is made available to those full-time members who need such assistance to participate in the program.
- a. Member Eligibility
 - 1) The member must be the parent or legal guardian in need of child care for a child under the age of 13 who resides with the member.
 - 2) The member's family income does not exceed income eligibility guidelines – no more than 75% of the state's median income.
 - 3) The member may not receive child care subsidies from another source during his/her period of AmeriCorps service.
 - 4) The member certifies that they need child care assistance in order to participate in the program

- b. **Qualified Providers:** AmeriCorps will pay 100% of the current market rate of child care costs for eligible members who select qualified child care providers; providers must qualify under the Child Care and Development Block Grant State Plan. Payments will not be made to ineligible providers.

Fiscal Site Visits

Fiscal monitoring site visits are in-depth examinations of the subgrantee's internal control and financial management systems in place to appropriately administer AmeriCorps funds. Fiscal site visits may occur randomly or if reporting and desk monitoring results demonstrate fiscal weaknesses. During the fiscal site visit, a program must be able to document AmeriCorps/VSC-charged expenditures with source documentation, staff and member time (with appropriate limits and allocations), a clear cost allocation plan that separates the AmeriCorps grant from other funding sources, and all sources and evidence of cash and in-kind match.

Following the site visit, the VSC will provide a preliminary report of findings. The VSC will work with the program to establish a corrective action plan for all findings and will then issue a final report. VSC program staff will continue to provide technical assistance and follow-up on any findings that are not corrected or resolved. Undocumented expenses and/or costs deemed unallowable may result in a cost disallowance. For cost disallowances, the subgrantee will be required to remit payment to VDSS, if reimbursement of the cost(s) had been rendered, and revisions of PERs and AFRs will be required. Additional requests for reimbursement may be subject to additional documentation requirements.

PROGRAM REPORTING AND IMPACT

The Virginia Service Commission requires quarterly programmatic reporting of all subgrantees. These reports measure progress made throughout the year towards the Performance Measures identified by each program, and are called Grantee Progress Reports or GPRs. The Virginia Service Commission submits an annual Grantee Progress Report to CNCS.



Grantee Reporting: Grantee Progress Reports (GPR)

ALL Grantee Progress Reports are submitted in OnCorps.

All programs are REQUIRED to submit the following:

- Quarterly Progress Reports (Due 10th of month following end of quarter)
Q1 = Oct. 1 – Dec. 31 (may include activities prior to October): Due January 10
Q2 = January 1 – March 31: Due April 10
Q3 = April 1 June 30: Due July 10
Q4 = July 1 – Sept. 30: Due October 10
- Mid-Year GPR (Same as Q2 above)
Report includes all activities from Q1 and Q2: Due April 10
- End-of-year GPR
Report includes all activities for the entire program year: Due October 10

Virginia requires numerical data and narrative information on all reports; guidelines are included in the GPR template. Information requested includes:

- Demographics (Related to AmeriCorps members, volunteers, and clients served)
- Member Service Year (MSY) Data
- Performance Indicator Data (Enrollment/Retention/Exit rates)
- Performance Measures (Target and Actual rates for all approved Performance Measures)
- Narratives (Related to Impact, Member Experience/Highlights, Best Practices, Special Events, Great Stories, Successes and Challenges, and Sustainability).

Note: Data is entered on a Quarterly basis; OnCorps aggregates the information when producing reports (i.e., enter Q2 data for the second quarterly report and when a Mid-year GPR is generated, Q1 data that was entered in Q1 will be included).

Quarterly Progress Reports

Programs are required to submit quarterly progress reports detailing progress toward performance measures, program activities, and steps toward sustainability. Quarterly Progress Reports are due no later than the 10th of the month following the end of the quarter. For example, for Q1 (October – December), the Quarterly Progress Report is due on January 10 - submitted using the Virginia OnCorps reporting system. Reports are reviewed by VSC Program Officers, who may provide feedback as necessary for clarification or requesting additional information. Based on the report, programs may be required to provide written correspondence, participate in specific training, and/or receive additional site visits.

Mid-Year GPR

Report includes all activities from Q1 and Q2: Due April 10

Q1 data is added (in OnCorps) to Q2 data for the Mid-year GPR. The same process is followed for quarterly reporting. Reports are reviewed by VSC Program Officers, who may provide feedback as necessary for clarification or requesting additional information. Based on the report, programs may be required to provide written correspondence, participate in specific training, and/or receive additional site visits.

End-of-Year GPR

Report includes all activities for the entire program year: Due October 10

Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 data entered by programs is added (cumulatively by OnCorps) for the End-of-year GPR. In addition, the following may be included in the End-of-year GPR – as requested by VSC and/or CNCS:

- An overall evaluation of the project including an assessment of whether the project's goals and objectives were met
- Any problems or delays that were encountered and how they were resolved
- An assessment of the program's effectiveness and the value to the community, Members and recipients
- Sustainability efforts that have been made to continue the program past the grant period
- Copies of any materials that were developed under the contract

Quarterly, Mid-Year and End-of-Year GPRs are reviewed by VSC Program Officers, who may provide feedback as necessary for clarification or as a request for additional information. Based on the GPRs, programs may be required to provide written correspondence, participate in specific training, and/or receive additional site visits to address specific program issues.

All data for Grantee Progress Reports (GPR) are recorded online via OnCorps.

Virginia OnCorps

[Virginia OnCorps](http://va.oncorpsreports.com) is an electronic program reporting and management system utilized by Virginia AmeriCorps programs, the VSC, and numerous National Service programs nationwide to collect programmatic and financial data. Virginia OnCorps can be accessed via <http://va.oncorpsreports.com>.

Summary of Data Reported in OnCorps:

Programmatic Data:

- Manage Records: Program and Program Director contact information and site information, Site Supervisor and member information.
- Reporting: Grantee Progress Reports (GPRs). Four Quarterly Reports are required of each program. End-of-year (Q4) GPRs are submitted by VSC to CNCS.
- Time Tracking: Member and Site Supervisor hours.
- Narratives: Analysis of Impact, Impact Snapshots, Member Experience, Best Practices, Member Highlights, Special Events, Successes and Challenges, and Sustainability – detailed descriptions of these sections are in the GPR report template.

Financial Data:

Periodic Expense Reports (PERs) are due the 10th of the month following the reporting period and Aggregate Financial Reports (AFR) are due quarterly.

OnCorps is a communication vehicle as its home page and resources pages are customizable. Any VSC notices are visible at log in and on the RESOURCES tab.

Note: VSC Staff and Program Directors have different OnCorps formats – what the Commission Staff sees is different from what Program Directors see – this is an important distinction, especially during technical assistance calls/visits.

Getting Started in OnCorps:

New programs directors and staff designated to report in OnCorps will be issued a username and password by VSC to enter the OnCorps system; passwords can be changed once an individual has entered OnCorps. An extensive list of tutorials is available in OnCorps based on the designation of the user (i.e., AmeriCorps Members, site Supervisors, Program Directors, and State Commission staff) via the HELP > Help Resources and Tutorials tab. Technical assistance is available at ocrhelp@oncorpsreports.com.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation – a formal scientific process for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data about how well a program was implemented (process evaluation) or how effectively the program accomplished desired outcomes/impacts (outcome/impact evaluation) – is an important component of CNCS-funded programs to assess overall program effectiveness, and more specifically, to determine if proposed interventions achieve desired outcomes.

As articulated in the AmeriCorps regulations 45 CFR §§ 2522.700-740, all AmeriCorps State and National grantees that receive an average annual Corporation grant of \$500,000 or more must conduct an independent evaluation. An independent evaluation

uses an external evaluator who has no formal or personal relationship with, or stake in the administration, management, or finances of the grantee or of the program to be evaluated.

All other AmeriCorps State and National grantees must conduct an internal evaluation. An internal evaluation is designed and conducted by qualified program staff or other stakeholders, such as board members, partners, or volunteer affiliates.

Summary of CNCS Evaluation Requirements:

If you are a . . .	You will submit an . . .
State formula grantee	Evaluation as specified by your state commission
State competitive grantee with an average annual Corporation grant under \$500,000	Internal Evaluation
State complete grantee with an average annual Corporation grant of \$500,000 or more	Independent Evaluation

If you are recompeting, you are required to submit "a summary of your evaluation efforts or plan to date, and a copy of any evaluation that has been completed, as part of your application for funding" (45 CFR § 2522.730). If you recompete again, you are required to submit a completed evaluation with your application. The Corporation will consider the results of your evaluation "in assessing the quality and outcomes of your program" (45 CFR § 2522.470).

If you receive an average of \$500,000 or more per year from the Corporation, averaged over the last three years of funding you have received before you recompete, we expect you to conduct an independent evaluation by contracting with an external evaluator. The AmeriCorps regulations describe how this evaluation should provide evidence of a causal relationship between program activities and outcomes (45 CFR § 2522.700). You may consider using an experimental or quasi-experimental design, or compare your results with national/state/local data. Your external evaluation method should match the size, scale, and purpose of your program.

In our ongoing effort to reduce burden on grantees, especially those with smaller grants, grantees an average annual grant under \$500,000 may submit an internal evaluation. The primary difference between the independent evaluations that grantees that receive \$500,000 or over are required to submit and the internal evaluation is who conducts the evaluation study. Your own staff and other stakeholders can serve as internal evaluators.

We encourage you to design your internal evaluation so that it will yield data most useful to you. You may opt for an impact evaluation, or you may conduct a process or management evaluation. You are not required to conduct an experimental or quasi-

experimental evaluation that proves causality, which is required of grantees that receive \$500,000 or over, although you are allowed to conduct this type of study. We expect the same high quality that we expect of a larger grantee, regardless of the type of evaluation you decide to conduct.

In addition to the above reports and procedures, VSC may collect and review additional information (e.g., service hour timesheets, self-reporting fiscal assessments, audit reports, etc.) as related to program reporting, monitoring, and/or evaluation. Additional reports, visits, teleconferences, correspondence, and training may be required based upon program performance and compliance.

Program grantees agree to provide any additional reports that the VSC may request by written notice.

Program grantees are required to submit reports in a format determined by the VSC.

The Corporation may, in its discretion, supersede these requirements with an alternative evaluation approach, including one conducted by the Corporation at the national level. Grantees must cooperate fully with all Corporation evaluation activities.

COMMUNICATION, MEDIA, AND EVENTS

External communications through media relations, social media, and your website is vitally important to the success of your program. Telling your member stories and communicating about your program's successes not only feels good for your members and staff, but it helps to garner and build support for your program with the community you serve and with your statewide and national partners. No one is better than telling your story than your program staff, members, and partners! Although it takes some time and effort to communicate effectively throughout your program year, it is worth it in so many ways – attracting more resources for your program including volunteers, sponsors, and funders.



Program Responsibilities

Your program is responsible for maintaining ongoing outward communications and developing a strategic approach to publicizing your message. Any positive media coverage you generate strengthens your organization's reputation as a trusted and credible resource in your community. Communications channels you should target include traditional media sources (newspaper, TV, and radio), social media outlets (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.), e-newsletters and publications from partners and constituents (CNCS, VSC, government agencies, and other organizations), and your own organization's website and publications (e-newsletters, etc.)

VSC is an important resource for you to utilize to amplify your stories and messages. Subgrantees are responsible for assuring that the proper VSC acknowledgement occurs and that consistent core messaging is used. This guide will serve as your resource for media relations, storytelling, event planning, and branding.

Branding Guidelines

Publications and websites created by members or grant funded staff must be consistent with the purposes of the grant and must include follow [national branding guidelines](#).

Media Relations

The first step in communications planning is always establishing your audience. Based on that audience you will be able to choose the right outlet for your message. From

there you can shape your message and target the appropriate media source which will bring you greater success.

Newspapers

Local newspapers are your best bet for getting local recognition, reach potential volunteers, and get the attention of decision makers in your community -- such as business leaders, elected officials, and experts. When writing/pitching your story you should use the following questions as a guideline:

- Who is the story about and whom does it affect?
- What is happening and why is it newsworthy?
- When is, the story occurring?
- Where is, the story taking place?
- Why does this story matter? Why should readers care?
- How does this story affect my community?

Larger metropolitan areas, like Richmond and Norfolk, have daily newspapers with various types of content you can target -- news, features, editorials, columns, op-eds, and letters to the editor. Op-eds or letters to the editor can be written by you, supporters, or board members to express an opinion on issues of importance to your organization. Smaller communities often have weekly papers that have similar content but reported over a longer period so it is important to be aware of their deadlines before pitching your stories.

Often the larger daily papers will have reporters who work a “beat” such as community service. Find out who reports on the issues for which your content might relate and develop a relationship with those contacts. You will more than likely contact the news editor for the weekly newspapers serving your community.

Most newspapers receive content through email. Do as much work for the publication as possible. Create a headline, write the story, as you would like it printed, and include photos whenever possible. Be clear and concise and use correct [AP Style language](#). Only submit content if you feel you have legitimate news or feature story that answers the questions above.

Television

Your local affiliates of both national and cable news stations spend a large chunk of airtime focusing on local issues. It is a good idea to contact them about a local event or initiative you are organizing. Think about your content in terms of visual interest. Does your event or story have a strong visual element? If so, submit your pitch to your local affiliate via email or call the news director directly. Many local affiliates have a Community Service or Good News feature, which are often perfect for your stories.

Radio

Your local radio stations tailor their programming to a specific audience. Determining your area stations' format and audience is an important step to including radio outreach in your public relations strategy. Those stations that include talk radio and news segments are the prime radio stations you should target to cover in depth aspects of your program or to interview one of your spokespeople on the air. If you are pitching a public service announcement, you can (and in most cases, should) expand your radio outreach to stations that only have music programming.

Press Releases vs. Media Advisories

Press releases should only be sent to media outlets for major events and news. Most content can be solicited with a simple email pitch, but if your program is planning a large-scale service project or has made a major accomplishment – then a press release would be a great idea. Use the following template when drafting your press release: <http://virginiashervice.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/GENERAL-SAMPLE-PRESS-RELEASE.docx>

A media advisory concisely alerts the media to an upcoming event (like a press conference). It serves as an invitation that answers only the important questions: Who, What, When, Where, and Why. You should utilize media advisories for National Days of Service Events, Regional Launches, etc. Use the following template when drafting your press release: <http://virginiashervice.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/SAMPLE-MEDIA-ADVISORY.docx>

Social Media

Social media is the perfect outlet for sharing your member stories and program news. Not only is it a low-cost outlet, it fosters a spirit of engagement among your organization, its members, and the community you serve. Positivity is a hallmark of organizational social media marketing which is perfect for national service and its core message.

All programs are strongly encouraged to follow/like VSC's social media pages to stay up to date on the latest national service and volunteerism updates.

- Twitter - @VAservice
- Facebook - @VirginiaService
- Instagram - servevirginia

VSC will work to amplify your program's own posts by sharing with our network of followers. When sharing information about your program on social media, please tag us in your posts so that we can easily amplify your messages.

All programs are also strongly encouraged to follow/like CNCS' social media pages to stay up to date on the latest content about AmeriCorps and National Service.

- @AmeriCorps
- @NationalService
- #AmeriCorps
- #NationalService

Also, remember to tag special initiatives and National Days of Service with the correct hashtag for maximum impact. (See Special Events.)

Last, but not least, we encourage you to send VSC pictures, great stories, and upcoming events that we can feature on our social media pages and website (See VirginiaService.virginia.gov below.) Please send this information on a regular basis to americorpsinfo@dss.virginia.gov.

Social Media FAQs

How often should I post on social media?

Your program should try to post original content (content generated by you and not shared or retweeted content) on Twitter at least 3-4 times per week and on Facebook 1-2 times per week. Additionally, try to engage with other national service programs, partners, and constituents by sharing, liking, and/or retweeting their content regularly.

What type of content should I post?

Acceptable content generated from your program should include positive member stories, new data, event recaps, helpful resources, and content relevant to CNCS initiatives. Utilize the [2019 VSC Content Calendar](#) as you are generating content as a guide.

What type of content should I NOT post?

National service programs should never post political content (even if it advocates for issues relevant to your program), religious content, or any information that does not build your program's brand. Ask yourself the question: "Does this content help to build my AmeriCorps program's brand and tell our story?" (This same rule goes for your members' national service-related content as well.) Follow the rules of Prohibited Activities.

Does my content have to include graphics?

It is always best if you can include graphic element to your content. Online tools like [Canva](#) are a great resource for generating quick, professional visual elements that will help your posts not only get noticed, but also receive

engagement. Remember to take photos and shoot video throughout the year so that you have ample images for your content.

Is it ok to use a social media scheduling tool like [Hootsuite](#) or [Buffer](#)?

Yes! Despite the trend of social media company's like Facebook showing preference to their own schedule tools, you probably don't have a great deal of time to devote to this task. Tools like Hootsuite and Buffer are free and will save your sanity. Carve out some time regularly to schedule your content ahead of time.

Websites

AmeriCorps Logo - The [Virginia AmeriCorps logo](#) should appear on ONE OR MORE LOCATIONS on the *homepage*.

- Header
- Footer
- Sidebar
- Main Content Area

AmeriCorps Program Webpage - A direct hyperlink to information about the sub-grantee's AmeriCorps program should be present on ONE OR MORE LOCATIONS OF the sub-grantee's *homepage*; or must be present on one or more locations no more than one (1) click from the *homepage*.

- Dropdown Menu
- Sidebar
- Main Content Area

If at all possible, programs should manage a stand-alone webpage on their sub-grantee website about their AmeriCorps program.

Constructing Your AmeriCorps Webpage

AmeriCorps General Info - Many visitors to your website may not know about AmeriCorps so include a brief explanation of the program:

EXAMPLE: AmeriCorps is a network of service programs offering the opportunity for individuals of all ages and backgrounds to serve and meet community needs. Members address the most critical problems in the areas of education, economic opportunity, veteran and military family services, health, the environment, and disaster services. In exchange for a specified term of service, AmeriCorps members earn a living allowance as well as an educational award to pay back qualified student loans or to finance college, graduate school or vocational training.

Unique AmeriCorps Program Info – Give a simple and clear explanation of your organization's AmeriCorps program.

Members of the (Program Name) AmeriCorps program serve in the (Program Site Locations) by (Member Service Activities). (Program Name) builds partnerships with (Partners) to provide (Community Impact) to (Who You Serve).

Since (Year Program Began), the program has (consider your Performance Measures – what has your program achieved with Americorps?). The (Program Name) has engaged more than (Number of AmeriCorps Members) who have (Tout Dollar Amount of Education Awards Received, or Other Measures Such as Job Placement or Other Accolades).

EXAMPLE: Members of the XYZ AmeriCorps program connect families in the Petersburg area experiencing homelessness to community resources and provide an intensive job-readiness program that assists individuals with obtaining employment. The XYZ AmeriCorps program builds partnerships with XYZ Community College and the XYZ Workforce Development Center to provide resources and training, including computer skills training, to individuals experiencing homelessness.

Since 2013, the XYZ AmeriCorps program has ensured that more than 1,700 individuals completed certifications in computer technology; and has connected more than 1,000 homeless individuals with full- or part-time employment positions. The program has engaged 200 AmeriCorps members who have earned more than \$100,000 in Education Awards. More than 70% of our AmeriCorps members are currently employed in full-time careers earning an average annual salary of \$50,000 or more!

Other Webpage Elements

- Great photos and/or videos of your members in service
- Testimonials of your members
- Announcement that your organization is an Employer of National Service
- Link to membership application
- Announcement of AmeriCorps opportunities with your program and organization
- Link to VirginiaService.virginia.gov AmeriCorps webpage
- Link to [CNCS AmeriCorps website](http://CNCS.org)
- Links to Social Media
- E-mail sign up form (your organization's newsletter and the Virginia Service Commission's Newsletter)
- Contact Information for direct contact to your program director (phone and email)

If your organization is unable to accomplish this, our office will consider accepting a reasonable alternative, presented in writing and receiving written approval, prior to receiving any AmeriCorps funding.

National Service Days & Recognition

National service members are required to participate in CNCS-sanctioned Days of Service including:

- [Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service](#) (January 20, 2020)
Programs either plan to host an event or join forces with other programs in your area. These events should honor the legacy of Dr. King and should feature a service project element.
- [AmeriCorps Week](#) (March 8-14, 2020) - AmeriCorps Week is a time to amplify the work that national service programs are doing in your community and thank your members for their service. Although your program is not required to host a service project for this event, it is an effective way to promote AmeriCorps in your community. Throughout the week, you should utilize social media to tell your program's story and applaud your members.
- [National Service Recognition Day](#) (April 7, 2020 tent.) – National Service Recognition Day (formerly Mayor and County Recognition Day) is designed to highlight your program within your local community. Mayors and county leaders should be contacted in advance to show their support for national service by signing on to the national registry. Programs will work with the State Office of CNCS, VSC, and other programs in your area to host events at which your local leaders will be invited to attend and celebrate your programs and their impact. Following these ceremonies, your programs should participate in a community service project. (See Service Projects below.)
- [9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance](#) (September 11) - This national day of service honors those who lost their lives on September 11th by serving in their communities. Programs plan to either host an event or join forces with other programs in your area.
 - [Additional Resources](#)
- AmeriCorps Opening Day Event & Training (September 26-27, 2019) - At the beginning of each program year programs are required to attend or coordinate launch events in their region to kick off their program year and “swear in” their new members with the [AmeriCorps Pledge](#).

VSC Signature Events

- [Virginia Volunteerism and Service Conference](#) (May)
VSC hosts an annual conference featuring workshops and networking opportunities for nonprofit and service organizations throughout Virginia. Program directors and members are highly encouraged to attend.
- [Robert Wone Award for Exemplary Service/National Service Awards](#) (May)
The Robert E. Wone Award for Exemplary Service was established in memory of Robert E. Wone, who served on the Governor's Commission on Community and National Service from 2002-2006 and dedicated his life volunteering for

charitable organizations and offering pro bono legal service. The award recognizes an exemplary AmeriCorps member who has exhibited the same dedication to community service and civic engagement as did Mr. Wone. Nominations for the Wone Award, along with the Virginia National Service Awards, are accepted in February/March and winners are announced at the Virginia Volunteerism and Service Conference in May.

- **Service Projects**

Programs are required to have their members participate in and recruit volunteers for service projects in your community.

- [CNCS Volunteer Project Resources](#)
- [145+ Community Service Project Ideas](#)
- [More Ideas for Service Projects on Pinterest](#)

Elements of a Great AmeriCorps Event

1. **Invite Stakeholders**

VSC strongly encourages subgrantees to identify and invite members of the Governor's Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism, VSC staff, local elected officials, local media, business partners, and community partners to special events, including national Days of Service.

2. **Designate a Spokesperson**

Subgrantees should designate a single spokesperson at each event that is familiar with core messaging, communication, and knows your program's elevator speech.

3. **Elevator Speech**

All your program members and staff should be able to recite a 1-2-minute elevator speech about your program. Things to remember for your elevator speech:

- Describe your program's work
- Mention AmeriCorps
- Use everyday language
- Be prepared for follow-up!
- Example: I am with the CARITAS AmeriCorps Program. We help families living in shelters in the Richmond area find housing and help the homeless find long-term employment.

4. **Plan!**

Make sure you are planning for each of the national Days of Service AND for service projects throughout the year. At the beginning of the program year, plan your calendar for the entire service year. Then, you can make a project plan for each event so that things run smoothly!

5. Items/Elements You Will Need

- AmeriCorps Logos, Signage, and Clothing (*required*)
 - Written Agenda/Program
 - Introduction of All Stakeholders
 - Feature Some Great Testimonials
 - Provide an Attraction Presentation as a Backdrop
 - Provide an Information Packet with Statistics
 - Photo Opportunities
 - Action and Visuals
 - Sponsor logos on printed materials.
 - Photo Releases - Members agree upon signing their contracts to the release of their photos for use by your organization, the State Commission and CNCS for purposes of promoting AmeriCorps. If your members work with students, a school photo release will cover any photography taken while on school grounds during member service hours. If you host an event, however, where photos will be taken and are not covered under a release you will need to have attendees sign photo release forms to publicize any photos from these events.
- [Sample Photo Release](#)

PR/Communications Checklist

Make sure you have everything you need in one place so that you can easily manage your communications plan.

- Resources and Logos
- Contact Lists
- Governor's Advisory Board and VSC Staff names
- Government Official Contacts
- Business Contacts

Virginia Service Website: VirginiaService.virginia.gov

VSC offers a wide range of resources and tools on its website, VirginiaService.virginia.gov. The website is organized into three major content areas: Volunteering, AmeriCorps and Community Services. In the AmeriCorps content area, you will find a full list of AmeriCorps State programs, information on other streams of

serve, AmeriCorps membership information, and operational and marketing resources for your programs. VirginiaService.virginia.gov is also an outlet to post your program's news and tell your member stories.

Ways to Use VirginiaService.virginia.gov:

- Post news items
- Share news items with your network
- Share member stories and photos
- Download tools and resources
- Stay up-to-date with the [Virginia AmeriCorps State Calendar](#)
- [Download logos and Days of Service materials](#)
- [Search for Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- [Connect with other Virginia AmeriCorps State programs](#)
- [Sign up for State Commission's newsletter](#)